

# econnections



August 2006

The electronic newsletter of MoDOT District 4, Kansas City Area

## MEETINGS/TRAINING

### Monday, August 7

Maintenance Superintendents, 9-11:30 a.m., Room 136E

### Wednesday, August 9

Missouri State Highways and Transportation Commission, St. Joseph

### Tuesday, August 15, Room 236E

Stock Area Team, 8-10 a.m., 87<sup>th</sup> Street Project Office

Job Status, District 1, 8-9:30 a.m., video conf.  
Job Status, Group 1, 9:30-10:30 a.m.  
Job Status, Group 2, 10:30-11:30 a.m.  
Job Status, Group 3, 12:30-1:30 p.m.  
Job Status, Group 4, 1:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m.

### Thursday, August 17

Management Team, 9-11 a.m. Boardroom

### Monday, August 21

Lamson Area Team, time & location to be determined

### Thursday, August 31

Munck Area Team, 8:30-11:30 a.m., Kearney maintenance facility

## EVENTS

### Friday, August 11

District 4 Day at Missouri State Fair, Sedalia

### Thursday, August 17

Route 7/Colbern Road intersection improvements public hearing, 4-7 p.m., Blue Springs Christian Church, 7920 South 7 Highway

## econnections sources

**Construction** Bev Chrisco, 6341

**Design** Flo Noear, 0455

**Regional Counsel** LeAnn Francis, 6382

**Administration** Judy Magruder, 6309

**General Services** Toni Terry, 0050

**Human Resources** Belinda Fite, 6321

**Right of Way** Melbra Taylor, 6351

**Traffic** Dawn Phillips, 0401

**Editor** Jennifer Benefield, 6328

## D4's Mid-Year Progress

## 2006 Construction is in Full Swing

by Steve Porter

Downtown bridges are gone at Oak, Locust and Truman Road, the eastbound I-70 bridge over Manchester Trafficway is fixed and new lanes are open in the Triangle.

Mark it up as another good start for MoDOT's 2006 construction season in the Kansas City area.

There's still plenty to do, and most work is under way, but three big projects are drawing the most attention from motorists and the public:

■ I-435 Bridge at the Missouri River – Rehabilitation of the bridge deck is completed on two of the three northbound lanes and progressing on the second southbound lane. The work has reduced traffic to two narrow lanes in each direction throughout the spring and summer. All lanes are expected to be open late this fall.

■ The Triangle – New alignment of southbound I-435 to southbound Route 71 and a third eastbound lane of I-470 opened late this summer. Access at Red Bridge Road is scheduled to open in the next month, and by late this season, all Route 71 traffic between Red Bridge

and Blue Ridge Boulevard will shift to collector ramps now under construction. That will set the stage for the last Triangle project, reconstructing mainline 71 from Red Bridge to Blue Ridge. The massive project is on schedule for completion by late 2008.

■ Downtown Loop – Rehabilitation of pavement and bridges on I-670, I-29/35 and replacement of bridges over I-670 have closed northbound I-29/35 on the west side of the downtown loop from I-35

*continued on page 2*



## Employees Scramble to Help St. Louis

by Joel Blobaum

Strong storms that rolled through St. Louis in mid-July left thousands of people without power. Eight District 4 employees quickly came to the city's aid when emergency supplies were needed 200 miles to the east.

During the late afternoon on July 20, District 4 learned that drivers were needed to transport supplies to St. Louis. **Cindy Beebe, Brian Ziegler, Brian Hof, Nevin Lees, Randy Whyde** and **Gary Endecott** of General Services, and **Scott Baner** and **Robert Pruitt** of Motorist Assist, volunteered for the all-night round-trip

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## D4 to Test Hybrid Bucket Trucks

by Kristi Jamison

MoDOT is the first government agency in the nation to test a new energy saving, environmentally friendly, diesel-electric bucket truck in Districts 4, 6 and 7. MoDOT expects the Utility Hybrid Truck Pilot Program to demonstrate the vehicle's ability to cut fuel costs and smog-producing emissions in half, while also reducing maintenance costs, reducing noise and providing an alternative power source in emergencies.

"MoDOT is proud to participate in a pilot program that will enhance our ability to protect

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## Construction

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through at least September. Construction is soon to begin on new bridges over I-670 at Oak, Locust and Truman Road, while milling and resurfacing of I-670 in the south leg of the loop will be done during off-peak and night-time hours. Completion of all loop work is scheduled for September 2007.

Although there are dozens of preventative maintenance projects ranging from asphalt overlays to chip seals, and more than 30 Smooth Roads Initiative projects to diamond-grind, mill and resurface state routes, a score of projects are already completed at the season's midpoint.

Route 58 in Belton finished early this year, widening to three lanes with four roundabouts.

Route 33 in Clay County also was widened to three lanes in Kearney, and Route 150 was resurfaced between Routes 291 and 71 in southern Jackson County, all completed before the end of July.

Also completed are:

- Six new bridges and new highway lanes of Route 13 between Richmond and Route J in Ray County

- A new bridge on Route A over Wakenda Creek in Ray County

- Slide repairs and resurfacing of Route 58 two miles south of Route 50 at Centerview in Johnson County

- Resurfacing of Route 18 from Business 13 to Pennsylvania Street at Clinton in Henry County

- Diamond grinding east- and westbound lanes of Route 45 from Cosby Avenue to south of Chatham Avenue in Platte County

- Resurfacing of Route C from Route 92 to Cookingham Drive in Platte County

- Resurfacing and shoulder sealing of east- and westbound I-70 from Route Z to Johnson Drive in Lafayette County.

Much of this season's work has been scheduled for nighttime hours, but because of the high volume of projects, contractors have been given flexibility to work various hours to stay on pace for completion by the end of 2006.

## Hybrid Bucket Trucks

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the environment and realize substantial fuel cost savings at a time when gas and diesel prices continue to rise," said MoDOT Director **Pete Rahn**. "We look forward to learning more about how these vehicles will compare to the conventional trucks in our fleet and how they can help us make the best use of taxpayer dollars."

A bucket is used to lift maintenance workers in the air to install signs, fix traffic signals or replace streetlights. A conventional truck must remain running at a work site to operate the hydraulic arm that moves the bucket. New technology enables the hybrid truck's engine to be shut off at the work site, which significantly reduces emissions and saves fuel. Tests show hybrids use about 50 percent less fuel and reduce smog-forming emissions by almost half.

On average, a conventional bucket truck in MoDOT's fleet consumes 2,176 gallons of diesel fuel per year. Applying the fuel savings realized in earlier tests, a hybrid truck would only consume an estimated 1,088 gallons of fuel per year. With diesel fuel currently costing an average of \$2.88 per gallon in Missouri, MoDOT could potentially save approximately \$3,134 a year per vehicle by replacing conventional trucks with hybrid trucks in its fleet. Statewide, there are 106 conventional bucket trucks in MoDOT's fleet.

The department has received two out of three hybrids, which will be field tested for 18 months at district offices in Kansas City, St. Louis and Joplin. MoDOT will place the hybrid trucks in service along with comparably

sized conventional trucks to assess performance, reliability and business benefits. The hybrids and baseline conventional trucks will be equipped with monitoring devices that will compare the emissions and fuel economy of each type of truck.

The hybrid truck is manufactured by Warrenville, Ill.-based International and Cleveland, Ohio-based Eaton Corporation, a manufacturer of electrical systems and components. The truck's aerial device is manufactured by Altec Industries. Its complex electric motor operates from advanced lithium ion batteries and a diesel engine.

The vehicle recovers energy during braking, helping charge the batteries and provide additional power during acceleration. The hybrid system uses an electric-only mode to raise the bucket for up to two hours. It can also serve as a generator, producing up to 25 kilowatts of standby power that can be used, for example, to provide power to a traffic light that has gone out so that traffic can continue flowing without disruption until service is restored.

In addition to the MoDOT fleet, 13 utility companies from across the nation have also been selected to participate in the Utility Hybrid



Cathy Morrison

**MoDOT Director Pete Rahn (top) gives the thumbs up as Central Office General Services employee John Hayden showcases one of the new energy-saving hybrid bucket trucks that will be tested in Districts 4, 6 and 7 during an 18-month pilot program.**

Truck Pilot Program, which is sponsored by WestStart's Hybrid Truck Users Forum (HTUF). WestStart-CALSTART is a non-profit organization that plays a national role in efforts to advance the use of hybrid technologies in trucks.



## Corporate Ladder

### Welcome to District 4

**Crew worker** Milton Harris  
**Senior office assistant** Jennifer Vest

### Promoted

**Intermediate traffic studies specialist** Lindsay Hogan  
**Intermediate construction inspector** Nick Pino  
**Signal and lighting electrician** Brandon Welch  
**Senior crew worker** T.J. Williams  
**Intermediate crew worker** Teresa Wright

### Retired

**Motorist Assist operator** Larry Jefferson  
**Intermediate crew worker** Harry Madden  
**Senior crew worker** Dean Stutler

## The Mail Bag



The following voice mail message was received July 5 from Ms. Foster of Platte County:

*Thanks for getting our road all fixed up. It really looks nice and sure is smooth. Thanks, again.*

Editor's Note: This was Area Engineer **Kirsten Munck's** Route C POT project completed by the Riverside Project Office and Nashua maintenance facility.

The following message was received July 10 from Angel Cooper, Director of Precious Cargo Day Care:

*Dear MoDOT employees,  
I just wanted to say thank you for the kindness that you all displayed yesterday. Our van broke down and it had school age children on it. We were headed to Science City in Kansas City. Shortly after MoDOT employees stopped by and gave all the children and staff a soda because it was so hot. It was truly a blessing. Thanks again.*

The following e-mail message was received July 20 from Mr. VanDyke:

*I've been meaning to contact your department about the work being done on Route 169 / Broadway Extension. I work in downtown Kansas City and live in the Northland so I take*

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## From the Director

I want to let you know Governor Blunt signed a very important law recently – our work zone safety law – which will help keep you safer on the job. The law, which will give prosecutors an additional tool in pursuing action against those who violate traffic laws in work zones, increases various penalties for offenses occurring within highway work zones or construction zones.

The law creates two new crimes – endangerment of a highway worker and aggravated endangerment of a highway worker.

Under this act, any person convicted of a second or subsequent moving violation within a work zone will get a \$75 fine, and any person convicted of a second or subsequent speeding or passing violation in a work zone will get a \$300 fine.

The maximum penalty if a highway worker is injured or killed is a \$10,000 fine and loss of their license for a year (12 points).

We couldn't have passed these bills without the support and hard work of the Legislature, our contractors, and our partners in enforcement – particularly the Missouri State Highway Patrol. This was truly a group effort. Please remember to thank them whenever you can for their dedication to safety.

Also, Governor Blunt recently signed a new booster seat law which says a child 4-7 must be in a booster seat unless they are 80 pounds or 4'9" tall.

### Primary Safety Belt Law

Our biggest emphasis in the coming year will be on passing a primary safety belt law.

We know that seat belts save lives. This legislation has the potential to save more lives than any other single piece of traffic safety legislation.



**Pete Rahn**  
**MoDOT Director**

Missouri has had a safety belt law for 20 years. The passage of this legislation would simply allow for primary enforcement, which means that law enforcement could enforce the safety belt law like all other Missouri traffic laws.

Missouri's seat belt usage rate is one of the lowest in the nation. Currently 76 percent of Missourians already buckle up. A primary safety belt law raises this by an average of 11 percent. For Missouri, that could mean a savings of about 90 lives and over 1,000 serious injuries this year and every year after that.

If we pass this law, Missouri would also receive approximately \$16 million to use to make our roads even safer. The National Safety Council study also estimates Missouri could have saved \$103 million in Medicaid costs over a 10-year period if primary enforcement had been implemented in 2004.

We believe this new law along with increased law enforcement presence in a work zone will provide a safer working environment and will not only protect the highway workers but will protect all motorists driving through a work zone.

Please talk to your friends, family and neighbors about why Missouri needs a primary seat belt law. Please know we will continue to do all we can to keep you safe on the job. However, we also expect you to do your part by obeying all traffic laws and remembering to Buckle Up every time you get in a vehicle. Thanks for all you do for MoDOT. I appreciate your hard work and dedication!

Pete

## St. Louis Storms

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"All of these employees rearranged their schedules on a moment's notice to get the job done," Assistant District Engineer **Chris Redline** said. "It's exactly the type of selfless action that we've come to expect out of our employees when trouble arises."



David Carson, St. Louis Post-Dispatch

**Lightning streaks across the sky over I-55 as powerful thunderstorms ripped through St. Louis July 19. Eight D4 employees rearranged their schedules on a moment's notice to deliver supplies the following day.**

## The Mail Bag

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this route every day. My wife and I have both noticed the work being done along this stretch and just want to say to the crews: **THANK YOU!**

*They're doing a great job and we do appreciate their efforts. We also appreciate that they've been working nights to minimize the impact on traffic (with the recent heat wave I'm sure they're appreciating working at night as well). I know that the folks out there on the road – making the road, actually – seldom get to have any positive interaction with the members of the motoring public so I hope you'll pass this message along to them.*

## News from Across the District

### It's a Girl!

congratulations to Senior

Transportation Planner Hope Visconti and her husband, Buzz.

Tessa Ann was born July 20 at 9:14 a.m. She weighed 7 lbs. 13 oz. and was 18.5 inches long.



**It's a Girl!** congratulations to Traffic Operations Engineer Susan Barry. Meredith Eve Barry was born July 31 at 8:27 a.m. She weighed 8 lbs 9 oz., and was 19 inches long.

**Condolences:** our prayers are with the families of Technical Support Engineer **Warren Roberts**, Warrensburg Crew Worker **James Stranghoener**, Intermediate Design Technician **Tori Dailey**, Transportation Project Designer **Will Barrows**, former district traffic studies engineer Winfred Owen Henry, Intermediate Traffic Technician **Priscilla Harris**, and Transportation Project Manager **Mary Miller**.

Warren's brother, Mark David Roberts, passed away July 1. Memorial contributions may be made to the Sts. Joseph & Paul Catholic Church Parrish Hall Fund, 609 E. 4th Street, Owensboro, Ky., 42303.

James' brother, Ted Stranghoener, passed away July 4. Memorial contributions may be made to the "Adam Stranghoener Education Fund" c/o Oltmann Funeral Home, 412 S. Main St., Gerald, Mo. 63037.

Tori's grandmother, Marjorie Dailey, passed away July 14.

Will's father passed away July 17.

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## Safety Emphasis Paying Off

by Joel Blobaum

District 4 Safety Officer **Joe Jarboe** says he's never seen anything like it before. And that's a good thing.

Through the end of June, the Kansas City District had recorded only one lost-time injury, accounting for one lost workday, through the first half of 2006. Reported incidences are also down.

Jarboe said a couple of factors could be at work. "First, supervisors have become more proactive and are emphasizing safety with employees – including disciplinary action

when it's warranted," he said. "The new pre-employment post-offer physicals, as well as some re-engineering that has taken place, are also having a positive impact."

Regardless of the cause, Jarboe won't argue with the results. "Considering all the work going on between the Smooth Roads Initiative and our regular construction and maintenance operations, I don't know if we're getting good or lucky," he said.

Or, as Jarboe acknowledges, it could be some of both.

## Lime-Green Apparel on the Way to D4

by Joel Blobaum

A fashion statement? Not exactly, but MoDOT crews will soon be sporting a new look.

Lime-green reflective t-shirts are being added to MoDOT's approved list of work apparel. Distribution plans are being developed for the shirts, which can be worn in place of a safety vest on clear days during daylight hours. The shirts can be worn at night if employees are also wearing reflective (Class 3) pants.

District 4 employees helped test the polyester/cotton blend shirts last year, and found them to be cooler than wearing a shirt with a safety vest. D4 Safety Officer **Joe Jarboe** said

the shirts cannot be altered (sleeves cannot be cut off, for example), and must be washed without fabric softener. Available sizes are expected to range from small to 6XL.

"Anyone who would normally be required to wear a vest – construction inspectors, maintenance crews and the survey crews, for instance – can use them," Jarboe said. "They'll be distributed free to interested employees, and they don't replace the uniform contract option. They're an addition to the clothing options for employees."

Details on the shirt distribution will be announced soon.

## Neighboring Districts Lend a Hand with Sign Replacement

by Joel Blobaum

District 4 Signing Supervisor **Darrell Daugherty** is getting by with a little help from his new friends.

The Smooth Roads Initiative presented the Kansas City District with a tall order: Bring 17,000 highway signs across the district up to current standards. For the last 14 months, Daugherty's D4 crews have been supplemented by a variety of MoDOT personnel from Districts 1, 2 and 5.

The extra help has kept the sign-replacement project right on schedule. "We've replaced well over 10,000 signs to date, so we're well on our way," Daugherty said in late July. "I see no problem in being finished by the end of the year."

Daugherty said unsolicited offers of help came in almost as soon as District 4 received its marching orders. District 5 workers went

to work on Route 50 in Johnson County, and crews from the Carrollton maintenance facility in District 2 took on Interstate 35 signs in Clay County. District 1 personnel, including traffic department and bridge crew workers, replaced signs along I-29 in Platte County; they'll also work on Route 291 in Clay County.

"They did a beautiful job, and I think they enjoyed it because it gave them something new to do," Daugherty said. "Getting that kind of help without asking for it really makes you proud to be associated with MoDOT."

The opportunity also opened up an information exchange between the District 1 and District 4 sign shops. Employees from the St. Joseph and Kansas City facilities will spend time in each other's facilities to observe operations and exchange work practices.

## News

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Winfred Owen Henry passed away July 19. Condolences may be sent to his wife, Sheryl Henry, at 11704 E. 58th Terrace, Kansas City, Mo. 64133.

Priscilla's grandmother, Gracie Mae Porter, passed away July 20.

Mary's sister, Ellen Smith, passed away July 30.

**D4 Employees' Fund:** the July 12 cookout and bake sale netted \$351.20. This fund benefits D4 employees throughout the year who find themselves in financial distress due to events that are no fault of their own.

Mark your calendars...an ice cream social to raise additional money for the fund will be held Wednesday, August 16 at 1 p.m. in the D4 Break Room. Goodies will include Sheridan's Frozen Custard, Blue Chip Cookies & Dairy Queen ice cream cake.

**Randy Ashley** (Westline Maintenance Building) and **Steve Hanson** (Archie Maintenance Building) coordinated a D4 statewide crappie tournament May 13, 2006. Thirty teams participated.

The winners of the tournament went home with the following prizes:

First Place: **Rick Koll** and **Travis Mace** (D5).



Rick Koll (left) and Travis Mace of District 5 placed first in a statewide May 13 crappie tournament organized in District 4. Koll also caught the "Big Fish" weighing in at 1 lb. 12 oz.

They were the only team that weighed in full limit of 20 fish. Their 16.1 lb. catch paid \$532.50. Rick Koll also earned a \$60 prize for the Big Fish of the tournament weighing 1 lb. 12 oz.

Second Place: **Doug Borgmann** and **Steve Sickmeier** (D6). Their 17 fish totaling 12.1 lb. paid \$319.50

Third Place: **Donald Hall** and **Gary Tirey**,

## Employee Advisory Council

### Recognition of Long-Term Employees

At the June EAC meeting, Human Resources Director **Micki Knudsen** reported Human Resources has in its FY07 work plan a project to develop a policy on employee recognition. The new policy will give supervisors some flexibility on allowing paid time off, food, pins, etc., to recognize and reward employees. This policy will help support some of the other improvements MoDOT is working on such as the Portal Pilot (see full report at [wwwi/intranet/eac/meeting\\_minutes.htm](http://wwwi/intranet/eac/meeting_minutes.htm)). The suggestions the EAC gathered from employees late last year regarding additional recognition for long-term employees will be considered as the new policy is implemented. The new policy should come out in November 2006.



### Equity Increases

MoDOT will use the same criteria as the past two years to determine which employees will receive equity increases. The difference this year is the amount of funds available is less than in years past. Approximately 375 employees will receive increases (20-30 people per district) in September 2006.

### Maintenance Job Study

Central Office Human Resources began making visits to maintenance employees in the field mid-July to observe the jobs being done. Maintenance employees will still be asked to fill out job analysis questionnaires (JAQs), which will help with the non-summer duties that Central Office won't be able to observe.

MoDOT employees may view more EAC news on the intranet at: [wwwi/intranet/eac/meeting\\_minutes.htm](http://wwwi/intranet/eac/meeting_minutes.htm)

(D4). Their 18 fish totaling 11.5 lb. paid \$213.00.

**Above & Beyond:** congratulations to the following recipients of D4's Above & Beyond Award:

July 3-14: Maintenance Specialist **Joe Sims** for working many 10-12 hour days on the Smooth Roads Initiative.

July 17-31: the Property Damage Team for its presentation at a maintenance superintendent meeting in June: Maintenance Superintendent **Wess Murray**, Safety Officer **Joe Jarboe**, Area Engineer **Darryl Lamson**, Senior Risk Management Specialist **Donna Madison**, Maintenance Superintendent **Todd Gibson**, Maintenance Superintendent **Darrell Webb** and District Traffic Engineer **Tom Evans**.

August 1-15: Senior Highway Designer **Heather Barrows** & Transportation Project Designer **Craig Holdeman** for their expedited redesign work on crossovers #1 & #4 for Project J4P1630 (Route 50 resurfacing and curve realignment).

**NTPAW Awards:** MoDOT won three awards August 1 at the National Transportation Public Affairs Workshop:

Issues/Crisis Management – Kansas City Paseo Bridge (District 4)

Audio Public Service Announcement Without Consultant – Buckle-Up for Prom (Central Office)

Interactive Presentations – MAP Funding Allocation Challenge (Central Office).

NTPAW provides an opportunity for all state DOT public affairs/communications/community relations directors and staff to learn from experts, exchange information and share best practices. The awards are for the most outstanding work done over the past year from among all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. MoDOT tied for second most awards won (California was first with five).

### Results of the 2006 Election to the MoDOT and Patrol Employees' Retirement System Board of Trustees:

Eligible members are employees of the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and/or the Missouri State Highway Patrol (MSHP) who are members MPERS. The new terms were effective July 1, 2006.

MoDOT active employees elected **Sue Cox** as their representative on the Board of Trustees. Sue is a Special Projects Coordinator at the General Headquarters and is a 27-year veteran of MoDOT. She replaces D4 Senior Financial Services Specialist **Harold Reeder**.

MSHP active employees re-elected Lieutenant Juan Villanueva to the Board. Lieutenant Villanueva is assigned to the Troop D office in Springfield and is an 18-year veteran of the Patrol.

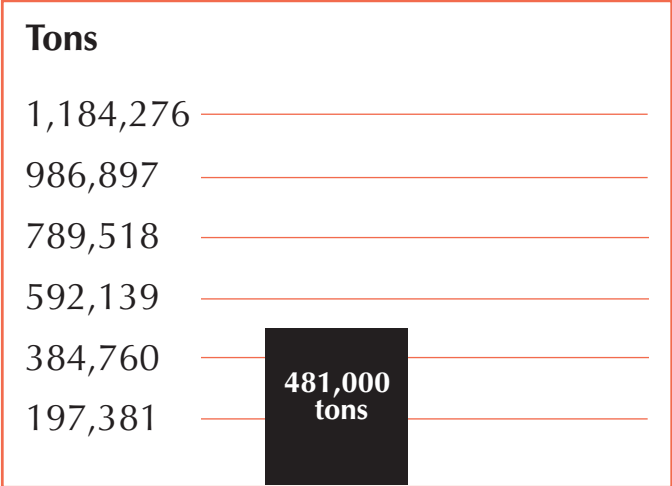
MoDOT and MSHP retirees elected Bob Sfreddo as their retiree representative on the Board of Trustees. Sfreddo retired from MoDOT as Director of Project Development in June 2000 and replaces Bill Shaw.



# Smooth Roads Initiative

490 centerline miles of the Kansas City Area’s busiest roadways in good condition by December 2006

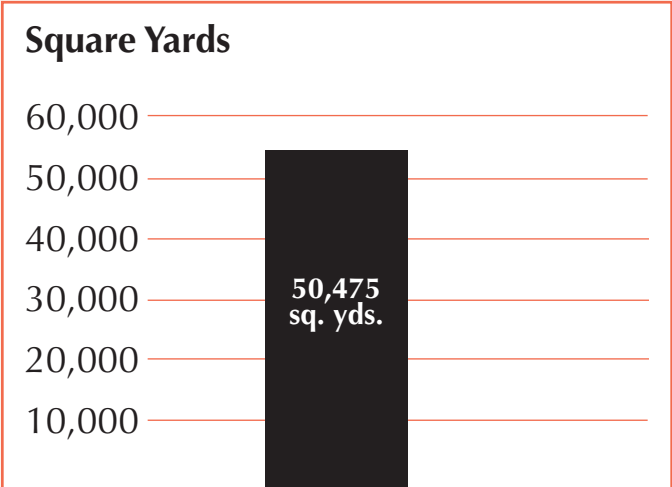
## Progress to Date



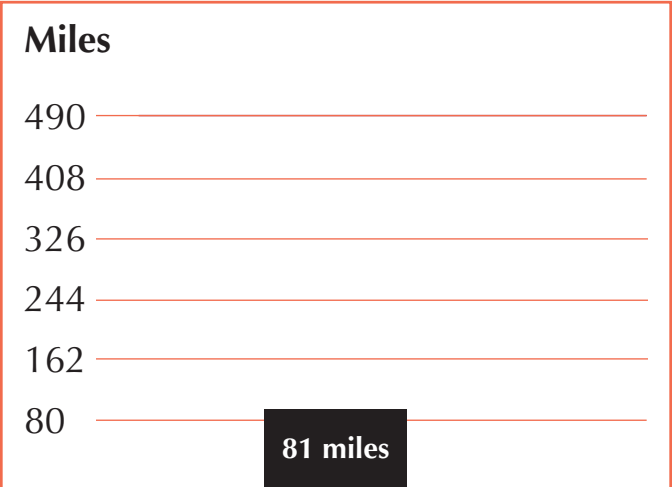
Tons of asphalt



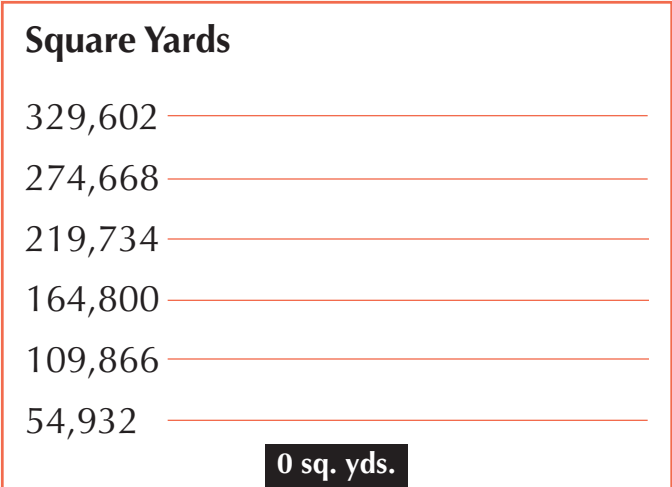
Striping



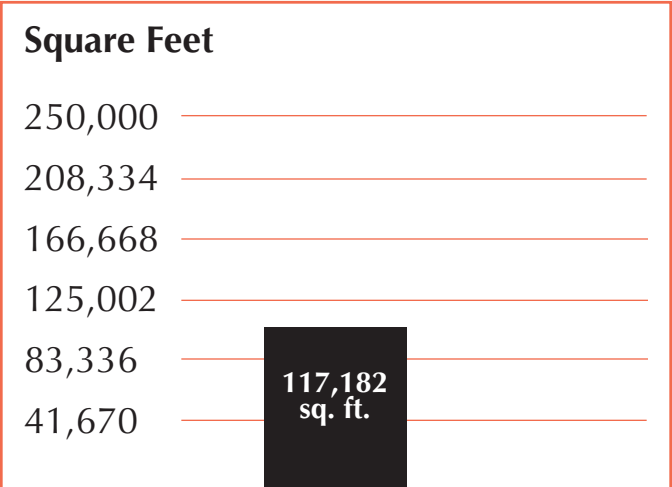
Pavement repair



Delineators



Ultrathin-bonded wearing surface

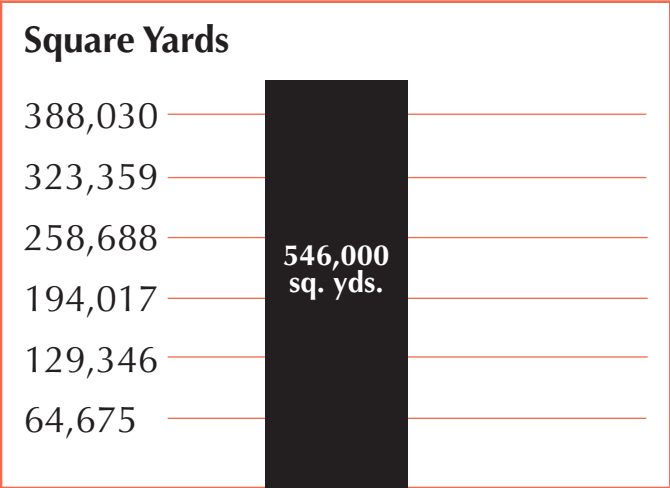


Signs

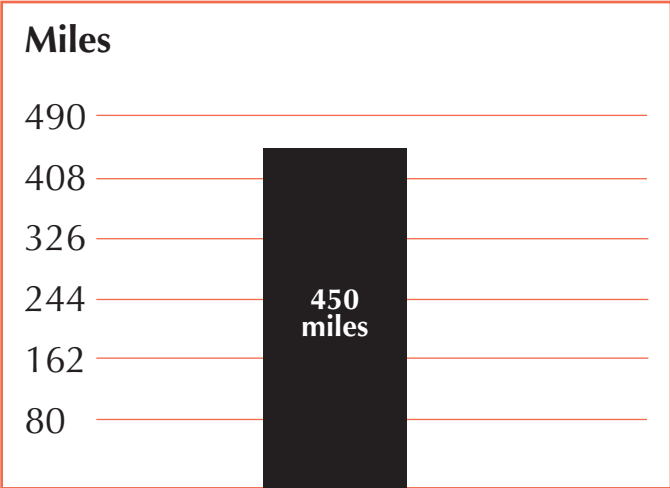
# Smooth Roads Initiative

490 centerline miles of the Kansas City Area’s busiest roadways in good condition by December 2006

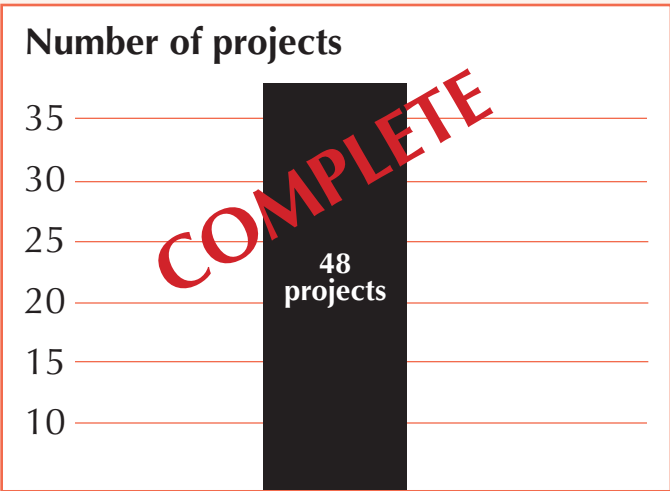
## Progress to Date



Diamond grinding



Clear zones cleared



Projects designed